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SERMON

DELIVERED AT

KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON,

JANUARY 1, 1809,

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BEING THE SABBATH OF THE AUTHOR'S

ORDINATION,

AS ONE OF THE

MINISTERS OF THAT SOCIETY.

BY SAMUEL CARY.

BOSTON,
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ORDINATION SERMON.

JEREMIAH xxiii. 28.

"HE THAT HATH MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY."

THAT GOD has created us for immortality, and that we ought to live like beings who are to live forever, are truths, which all of you, my friends, will assent to in a moment. There is something in human nature, which trembles at the very thought of eternal death; something which disclaims the sentiment with indignation, that faculties so noble must be utterly destroyed, that powers of intellect so comprehensive, so vigorous, so obviously formed for endless improvement, should decay and perish without the hope of restoration; that feelings which are able to rise above the sphere of terrestrial enjoyments, and to become fervently devoted to the source of all excellence, and to those purer pleasures which flow without cessation or diminution from the foot of his throne, will be suddenly extinguished, to revive no more. Let any person of thought and

feeling cast his eyes over the ever varying scenes of human life ; observe the strange mixture which is every where visible of delight and vexation, of hope and disappointment, of blessings and calamities ; remark how uniformly these things accompany each other, as if to convince us that in this world unmixed felicity is an empty sound ;—let him consider well what is the *real* value of what we term *pleasure*, how airy ! how transient ! let him see the wreath of honor withering, even when he who has gained it is placing it on his brow ; the hand of the sensualist palsied, even when the cup of joy has reached his lips ; let him see the host of envious and hateful passions hovering like demons around the head of greatness, and marking it as their prey ; let him observe how generally a long course of prosperity is followed by misfortune, and is enjoyed with trembling, as the inhabitants of some countries enjoy the mildness of a serene sky in fearful expectation of the tempest it forebodes ;—let him weigh these things well, and he will feel that the Christian doctrine of immortality is the most important truth which a rational being can know ; that to learn the way which leads to a better world is the truest wisdom, and to walk in it the truest felicity.

Proportionate to the importance of religion itself, is the importance and necessity of the Christian

ministry. If it is the object of every reasonable being to live forever in a state of happiness; and if it is acknowledged that to pursue this object steadily is really the most honorable of human employments, then the establishment of a class of men whose peculiar business is to point out the means by which happiness may be acquired, and to set before us every possible motive and encouragement to use them, is to be considered as an institution worthy of God himself, and full of benefits to mankind. If in the confusion of worldly business, and in the ardour of worldly attachments, men, however willing to go right, are constantly in danger of mistaking the road, are forever deviating from the course which terminates in Heaven, into winding paths, where dangers terrify and darkness bewilders them; then they who stand ready to take them by the hand and lead them back to light, and hope, and safety, whose friendly voice warns them of their danger, admonishes them of the pitfalls which lie before them, consoles them when they sink fainting to the earth, and animates them to press forward in the race, and be crowned at the goal; are their truest friends, and their greatest benefactors. The pastoral office was never intended to be an engine of unjust power, or of reducing the understandings or consciences of men to a state of slavery. The ambassadors of a meek and lowly Master are armed with no weapons but those of

reason, are entitled to no authority but that of virtue. We claim for ourselves no superstitious veneration, as if members of a privileged order, or because we are invested with an honorable office, but we would be loved, because we have discharged the duties of that office with sincerity and faithfulness. We neither profess to be endowed with the supernatural gifts and wisdom of the apostles, nor with their power of dictating opinions without the possibility of error; but we would be viewed as having from our situation constant and forcible motives to superior sanctity, and from our seclusion from worldly employments, having better means of understanding the oracles, which it is our duty to explain. The influence we wish to possess over the minds of our hearers, is the influence of truth, and of a good example.

It has become my business on this interesting occasion, to describe the character and duties of the Christian minister; and for this purpose I have selected the injunction of the Supreme Being to his prophets as a guide to our meditations "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." *To speak the word of God faithfully* may, perhaps, in the strict sense of the expressions, relate solely to the office of instruction. But I shall understand it in a larger sense, as comprehending both precept

and example ; or to use the language of the liturgy of the church, as containing the duty of "setting forth and showing the word of God, both by our *preaching* and *living*." Under these two principal divisions I shall arrange the duties of the faithful minister.

I. We are to view him in his character of a public instructer ; and that he may preach the word of God faithfully, it is necessary that he should *understand it*. The duty, therefore, of studying the scriptures zealously, honestly, and devoutly; and of making use of all the aid which is afforded by human science and the researches of learned men, presents itself at the beginning of his course. An opinion has unfortunately got into the world, founded upon misconception of some of the doctrines of the New-Testament, or not properly discriminating between the world as it was in the days of the apostles, and as it is at present ; that any considerable proficiency in what is termed the science of theology, is either *useless*, because all true Gospel preachers are made certain of the truth by direct inspiration ; or *worse than useless*, because it serves only to give men too great confidence in their own powers, and to create an impression of the sufficiency of reason unfavorable, and perhaps destructive to the influence of the spirit. It must be acknowledg-

ed that the existence of this opinion is a serious evil ; for the consequence may be, and perhaps has been, that men offer themselves as guides to Heaven, who are utterly ignorant of the road, that *they* undertake to enlighten the understandings of others, whose own minds are weakened by a thousand prejudices, whose intellectual eye cannot pierce the thick gloom, by which it is surrounded. It must be obvious, that the disciples of such masters will learn nothing but pernicious errors, will become attached to dark, mysterious, and unintelligible doctrines ; will be the bigoted advocates of a religion, if religion it may be called, which no man can believe, whose understanding is at all improved, and in which the Author of *reason* is dishonored by the contempt which is thrown upon his gift. Such men are not likely to become the favorites of the Deity, or to be rewarded by being made the subjects of that great miracle—supernatural illumination. These blind leaders will guide their blind charge into inevitable destruction.

It is certainly true that there are parts of the bible obvious to the meanest capacity. All the precepts which relate to our duty, all those doctrines which form the basis of the christian religion, and the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation ; such, for instance, as that Jesus Christ is the Son

of God, and the door and the guide to Heaven, and the master whom all believers are bound to obey; that faith, repentance and obedience are the conditions of immortal felicity; that there will be a resurrection of the dead; and that the obedient only will be rewarded and the disobedient punished in another life, are so plainly expressed, that the sincere, though unlettered enquirer, cannot mistake them. But something more than the knowledge of these plain truths is expected from the Christian minister. There certainly are many things in the sacred writings, which are hard to be understood, but which *may be* understood by minds that have been strengthened by proper discipline, and enriched by various and extensive knowledge. It should be remembered that the bible, which we have in our closets, and which is read in our churches, is a collection of distinct books, written originally by different men, in different countries, at different times, and in languages different from our own; that they contain allusions to the manners, customs, and opinions of the people to whom they are addressed, but which can now be perfectly understood by those only who are conversant in the literature of those times; that many of them were written on particular occasions, adapted to particular circumstances, intended to remove particular prejudices, or to destroy particular doctrines; all of which must be

familiar to the Christian preacher, or he is in danger of mistaking the object, scope, course of reasoning, or force of particular passages, in the writings he professes to explain. It should be remembered, also, that these books were written ages before the discovery of the art of printing; that the mode by which they have been handed down to our time was that of transcribing one manuscript copy from another; that consequently errors of omission, alteration and interpolation have crept into the text; that an accurate knowledge of the expressions which were in fact used by our Saviour and the apostles, can be obtained only by a careful examination and comparison of almost innumerable copies—and by the aid of honest and judicious criticism; that even when the real text is obtained, the true meaning of the terms is to be sought by studying other books on other subjects, written in the same or kindred languages; by comparing the parts of scripture with each other, and with the whole; by learning the various shades of meaning admitted by the same expressions; by comprehending generally the genius or idiom of the authors' dialect, the peculiarities of his style, whether plain or figurative, concise or diffuse, argumentative or pathetic; and by being thoroughly versed in the history natural, civil, and political, of all the countries which are either the subject of description, or the scene of narrative, of the birth

place of the writer.—My friends, when you remember these things, can you believe it possible that God will accept any violence of zeal as a substitute for knowledge, or that he will consider those as the faithful stewards of his word, who would either bury it in a napkin, or suffer it forever to remain a mystery for want of industry to explore its meaning?

2. Another duty of him who would preach the word of God faithfully, is to accustom himself to habits of frequent and close meditation: *Meditate upon these things,* says the apostle to Timothy, *and give thyself wholly to them.* If we think for one moment upon the nature and object of the ministerial office, that our business is to persuade rational beings to be rationally virtuous, and that we can hope to influence their conduct only through the medium of their understandings, this duty is manifestly of the first importance. What good or lasting effect can possibly be expected from passionate effusions, uttered without previous arrangement, thought and labor? What hope that such rhapsodies will be followed by the blessing of Heaven? What hope that they can drive iniquity from her strong holds, pluck up inveterate and deep-rooted prejudices, and make men pious and upright from principle? A minister, who has to address himself to various tempers, and to minds variously improv-

ed, should study all those means by which the understanding may be governed, and the will bent toward virtue ; he should know what motives operate with most force, what kind of arguments are most convincing. He should select topics for his discourses, which suggest a course of thinking adapted to the peculiar relations, circumstances and feelings of his hearers ; his sentiments should be properly arranged and methodized ; the scope of his discourse should be clear and easily comprehended ; his language strong and intelligible ; and his arguments disposed so skillfully as to strike the mind with all their force. It is thus only that he can do justice to his subject, or discharge his duty to God with fidelity ; and all this is the fruit of meditation.

The Christian minister is not only a teacher of the word of God, but its advocate and defender. He will find among the enemies of christianity not always men who are notorious for infamous vices, who deny its authority because they dare not believe it true, and whom it may be sufficient to answer in a style of general invective and contempt ; but men of fair characters and improved understandings, whose doubts are honest, who have a right to be convinced by cool reasoning. He will find others of strong, comprehensive, artful, and penetrating minds, who have searched all the stores of human

learning for weapons to overthrow this impregnable fortress; who can produce arguments, which an illiterate Christian cannot answer; who may confound him by a set of sophisms dexterously managed, or overwhelm him in a stream of splendid eloquence. If therefore the soldier of JESUS CHRIST would be faithful to his trust, he must make himself, with the divine assistance, mighty in the scriptures; he must strengthen the powers of his understanding, and explore all the sources of argument which were open to his adversary. He should be able to meet him on his own ground. He should learn to detect the fallacies of sophistry, and to seize the arguments of his antagonist with a grasp so nervous, that however slippery or flexible, however fruitful in artifices, however ready to change their shape, they cannot escape him. Now all this is the fruit of meditation.

3. It is the duty of a faithful preacher, having made himself master of the word of GOD, to preach it *in its purity*, or to deliver no doctrines on the authority of the Supreme Being, but such as he has thought proper to reveal explicitly. The learned teachers among the Jews, believing that the Mosaic law was not of itself sufficiently intelligible, undertook to explain it by so many paraphrases, theories, and interpretations, and insisted so strenuously upon

the importance of these commentaries, that the word of God became, as our Saviour told them, *of none effect*. This example, thus severely censured, should teach all Christian ministers the extreme danger of preaching with too much earnestness the peculiarities of human systems, even though the object of these systems should be, as is sometimes alleged, to make the word of God plain, or consistent with itself. It must be acknowledged, for why should we conceal imperfections so notorious, that there are visible even among ourselves too many of those failings which were reprobated in the expounders of the Jewish law. Human nature and human passions are the same in our age, as they were in the infancy of our religion ; and whenever there exists a strong and general influence over the mind, there is always danger that these passions may employ it in defence of error. It is perfectly natural that if we believe ourselves to have discovered truth, we should become strongly attached to the whole process of reasoning, by which our conclusions were obtained ; and if this process should be the result of our own ingenuity, or that of any man whom we particularly regard, then the principle of self-love, or pride, or perhaps conscience will prompt us to consider the system thus framed, of the utmost importance. We are in danger, therefore, of using our influence, though possibly the intention may be innocent, in

drawing followers round our own standard, in making slaves to our own sect, rather than disciples of him who died for all men. There is so much labor requisite to a right understanding of the word of God, that a Christian minister has really no time to become an expert sectarian. There is in the world so much immorality, against which it is our duty to contend earnestly, that we really ought to suffer our learned and pious brethren to amuse themselves with their harmless speculations, without pouring curses upon their heads, or thinking ourselves bound to injure their reputation and ruin their influence. And after all the danger is so obvious, that the sect to which we are devoted may be the weak opinions of a weak man, that it seems folly to claim for such a sect exclusively the epithet *Christian,* or to suppose that they only who believe it can inherit immortality.

Fourthly, to speak the word of God faithfully it is necessary that the preacher should disclose *the whole of it* to his hearers. I mean that he should keep back nothing, which he believes necessary to their improvement. He should conceal nothing which he believes to be true, because it may be unpleasant or unfashionable, or may give offence. He who preaches against vice, must of course expect to meet the frowns of the vicious. He who teaches re-

sistance to the tyranny of the world, must expect that the world will resist *him*. He ought not to satisfy himself with discussions of general topics, with dispensing general censure or praise, but he should honestly represent to his people the consequences of particular sins. His sermons should be a mirror, from which errors of every description should be reflected as they are. It is one very important part of his duty to *reprove* voluntary faults as they pass under his observation, to disclose the real motives of bad actions, and to display the extreme deceitfulness of the human heart. This may and ought always to be done with gentleness, but it ought also to be done faithfully, earnestly, and forcibly. It is certainly a most unwelcome employment, but it ought not to excite enmity; for without these friendly admonitions, thousands, ignorant of their danger, would rush into ruin. We must not suffer those, whom GOD has committed to our care, to perish in their sins, by concealing necessary truth. We must not see them loitering negligently on the edge of a precipice, without telling them plainly that death is before them.

II. We come in the last place to consider the Christian preacher as a good man. It is expected of us that we speak the word of GOD in the purity of our lives. A faithful minister must govern him-

self. He must exhibit himself to his flock a living example of the power of principle over the passions, of religion over the love of the world, of faith and hope over the vices of the age. He must teach *humility* by his own unassuming demeanor, by his willingness to be taught, and his readiness to acknowledge and rectify his errors. He must teach *gentleness*, by restraining his anger; *patience*, by submitting calmly to the will of heaven; *forgiveness*, by heaping coals of fire upon the head of his enemy. He must prove that the religion of his Master is not a mere philosophical speculation, but a living principle, which possesses the power of purifying the heart, and guiding its best affections to the throne of God.

Further, the Christian minister must prove his sincerity by never *sacrificing his principles to the fear of man*. Let him take care first to enlighten his conscience, by extending his information, and to keep it pure, by abstaining religiously from voluntary offences; and then let him obey his conscience with incorruptible fidelity. Let us never degrade the dignity of our characters by wavering and bending with every wind of popular opinion. Never let us renounce our integrity, nor give our uprightness to another. What if we *are* obliged to encounter the scorn of the vicious? What if the

storm of general hatred or general envy *should* burst upon our heads? If we can retire into ourselves, and find that best of Heaven's blessings, a peaceful conscience, we may fear no evil. We are protected by a shield, which nothing can penetrate; by a fortress, which never can be shaken; by a power, whose smile is happiness, whose loving-kindness is better than life. We are placed as watchmen on the gates of a city. We must speak, when we perceive the enemy approaching. We must speak plainly, or while we stand trembling and hesitating, our charge may be lost. The ambassador of JESUS CHRIST is unworthy of his office, if he dares not openly reveal the message of his Master. He need not do this in a tone of fierce defiance, or in a spirit of bitter animosity, or in the language of a common brawler; but let him take care of cowardice and dishonesty, for the threat of his LORD is dreadful—*whosoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will I also be ashamed, when I come in the glory of my Father.*

Finally, the minister of the gospel should prove himself deeply interested in the cause of his Master by imitating him in his *active beneficence.* That zeal which expends itself in passionate language, has nothing to do with religion. A Christian must *act* his principles, and not merely *talk* about them. We are not to content ourselves with professions of

benevolence, however ardent; with pathetic exhortations, with going through an established course of public duty. It is expected of us also, that we should exert ourselves effectually in the cause of humanity; that we should seize every occasion, which presents itself, of lessening the number of human calamities, of throwing some flowers and some cheerfulness into the path of misery. A minister should be always vigilant. He should watch the fortunate moment, when his instructions may sink into the heart; the moment of happiness, when the soul expands with gratitude, and the moment of bitterness, when the sufferer lifts his eyes and his hands to Heaven. He ought to remember that he is entrusted with a treasure of consolations, which he is to dispense freely to those who need them; and that there are moments when these consolations are inestimable. Sometimes the scene of his duty is the chamber of death. Sometimes he is called to witness the various emotions, the doubts and fears, the hopes and agitations, the remorse and repentance of beings, from whose sight the world and its pleasures are fading away; sometimes to see the last agonies of an expiring penitent, to hear the last groans of a wretch, whose conscience has now told him for the first time, that he has lived in vain. Then the minister of Jesus is an angel of mercy. Then it may be in his power to save a soul from

from everlasting death. How diligently should we labour while day continues ; for a night, long and cheerless, is speedily approaching ; our Master may appear suddenly before us, and at an hour when we think not, our probation in this world may terminate forever !

I have thus given some general, though very imperfect outline of the duties of the pastoral office. It is indeed a very difficult and responsible station ; but it is not without its encouragements and its pleasures. Its employments are such as may give delight to the purest and the greatest minds. They place us out of the reach of a thousand evils ; above the power of the world, above the fear of death. We are permitted to feel the most perfect of human enjoyments, the pleasure of doing well, of having added much to the good of others ; and if we continue faithful unto death, angels will welcome us into Heaven with songs of triumph, and crowns of glory.

My brethren of this Religious Society... In taking upon myself the obligations of a Christian Minister, it is hardly necessary to assure you that I feel their importance. The transaction, which has now passed, oppresses my mind with awe and with solicitude. The engagements, into which we have

mutually entered, may be followed by consequences so vast, so infinitely important to us all, that the imagination faints, while it endeavors to trace them. But I know what I have done. I have spoken much upon the duties of a minister, to convince you that I have at least some distinct conception of the nature of my employment; that I do not come among you utterly ignorant of what lies before me. I know that the charge, which has been committed to me, is great: I know the difficulties which beset my way—the tyranny and deceitfulness of the passions, and the blasting influence of the temptations of the world. I know the necessity of perpetual caution, of constant efforts, of unwearied diligence, and unyielding virtue. I tremble when I remember the weakness of human nature. But I know, also, that the honest though humble efforts of no human being, to promote the glory of his Maker, and to dispense benefits to mankind, were ever made in vain. *My grace,* says GOD, *is sufficient for thee; my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness.* He who exerts all his powers in the cause of his Master, may depend upon his assistance to keep him from falling. The same benignant being, who smiled graciously upon the mite of a poor widow at Jerusalem, will accept our offering of our talents, however contemptible, if it is all we have.

I hold it a crime, my friends, to pledge myself at this period of my life, to defend the dogmas of any human theological system. I acknowledge the infallibility of no being but Almighty God; the divine authority of no book but the Bible; the necessity of no other language to express articles of faith and rules of duty, than that, which the Spirit dictated to Christ and his Apostles. I will be the slave of no man's creed; because among all that endless variety of opinions, which have rent the Church asunder, there is not one, which is supported by better authority than the name of some human, and therefore erring teacher. I believe that every Christian has a right to judge for himself, and to reject what he proves to be absurd; and that every honest man, before he finally fixes upon his conclusions, should be *fairly convinced,* by a regular course of patient, devout, and laborious inquiry. Otherwise what are we but servile imitators, devoted to men rather than to Christ, and blessed in vain with rational powers, since we are either afraid or ashamed to use them?—I mean no improper reflections upon those, who think and act differently; but on this occasion it is proper for me to speak explicitly.

Now, my brethren, I acknowledge myself unqualified to decide peremptorily on questions, which

my aged and learned brethren in the ministry, after spending their whole lives in attempting to solve, have pronounced inexplicable. I am but a learner, a humble enquirer after truth. I may perhaps have learnt some confused notion of the extent of my ignorance. I may have advanced a little way from the shore upon the sea of knowledge, but it is only far enough to perceive that the expanse before me is absolutely boundless. You will therefore expect from me no detail of my speculative opinions. They are really of too little consequence to be brought forward at a period so interesting as the present. You know that I am a Christian. I have preached to you, and shall continue to preach, JESUS CHRIST and his gospel. My aim, as your minister, will be to lead you to *Heaven*, and not into the fields of religious war ; to urge you to be followers of *JESUS*, and not of Arminius, or Calvin, or Hopkins ; to promote *faith, hope,* and *charity,* in your hearts, and not to arm you with the weapons of controversy.

This day begins a new year. The season always brings with it many painful, as well as pleasing recollections. It is the period when a good man reviews his life, looks into his heart, and corrects his errors. It is a period, which witnesses many earnest expressions of penitence, and many

resolutions of future goodness. To us the day is peculiarly solemn. It is a new and most important epoch in our lives ; a day of new relations, of new duties, and new attachments. It opens new means of felicity, which it should be our earnest prayer that we may faithfully improve ; it begins a connexion, which GOD grant may continue to eternity. —You will permit me to say, that to me particularly the feelings of this day are deeply interesting. The year, which is now gone forever, has carried with it a man,* who was endeared to me by all the ties of nature and of love ; the being, to whom I owe not merely existence, but the knowledge of those principles, which make existence worth possessing. I have seen a servant of GOD walking through life with his eye fixed in Heaven, and at last finishing his course with joy. I have seen the tears of those, to whom he devoted his best days and his best faculties. I know that his memory is blessed. GOD has cut off some of my hopes, but he has given me a most animating example, and has not left me to pursue my course unguided and alone. My way will be made pleasant, and my cares relieved by the voice of *friendship*. The kindness, with

* The Rev. THOMAS CARY, Senior Pastor of the First Church in Newburyport, who died on the 24th of November, 1808, in the 64th year of his age.

which I have been already honored, and the warmth, with which I am received as a companion in the ministry, assure me that this friendship will be destroyed only by the stroke of death. May God grant that beyond the grave it may revive, and flourish, and be immortal, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; through whom to thee, Oh Almighty Father, who art the only living and true God, be glory, and worship, and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

From 7440.6
111,750
Feb. 1, 1871.

AT THE ORDINATION OF REV. SAMUEL CARY,
KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON, JAN. 1ST. 1809.

RIGHT HAND.

My dear brother, having declared you to be a pastor of this church, I do now, in behalf of the brethren, and at their particular request, give you the right hand of affection: and I do, in their name, promise you their friendship; their joy in your prosperity; their sympathy in your afflictions; their candour and indulgence; and all those offices of zeal and love, which will advance your reputation, and render your talents useful, and your situation happy.

I again offer you my right hand, as a token of my personal regard. I receive you into my bosom as a brother; and I request that you will give me a place in your heart.

CHARGE.

We have presented to you the hand of affection: and you will now permit me, my brother, to address you in a word of exhortation; and whilst I claim no superiority over you, to remind you of what you already know, and of duties, which have frequently been the subjects of your meditation.

The solemn charge, which St. Paul gives to his sons Timothy and Titus, contains the most essential rules, that can be offered to a young minister of the gospel. As, however, it has often been repeated on similar occasions, I shall not, though it is more important than any thing which I can suggest, go over it again; but I desire you to read it with attention, and to impress its precepts deeply on your heart.

In entering on the duties of the ministry, you have a responsible part to perform: You have to instruct this people by your preaching, and to edify them by your example.

I. YOUR aim in preaching the gospel should be, to make those, who hear you, wiser, happier, and better. Adopt therefore those modes, which will contribute most effectually to these great ends. Nourish the flock with substantial and salutary food. Lead them into green pastures, and beside the still waters; and not to thirsty plains, and the barren wilderness.

As the foundation of all solid improvement is laid in the understanding, begin with addressing the reason of your hearers. Convince them, by clear and weighty arguments, of the truth of the important doctrines which you teach, and of the precepts which you inculcate. When the understanding has received a truth, it will be more easy for you to interest the heart. But the belief or practice, which is built on nothing but enthusiasm or prejudice, has no permanent basis: temptation and passion will destroy it; and leave the mind without any principles or fixed rules of conduct.

I mean not to recommend to you a metaphysical mode of preaching. Metaphysicks is not only a sublime, but a useful, science; and it communicates to us the knowledge of many propositions, which are capable of complete demonstration. But

these profound speculations are unintelligible to a common auditory. They require the deep attention of the closet: they must be read more than once, and carefully examined; for in passing through the ear, they do not make a sufficient impression to be comprehended. Consider your flock, not as philosophers, but as men and christians; and deduce your arguments, not in general from abstract reasoning, but from the sacred scriptures, illuminated with the light of common sense.

When you have enlightened the head, it will then be proper for you to address and warm the heart. As this, however, requires extraordinary powers, you should here exert all your talents. Raise your eyes to heaven, and endeavour to acquire a glow and energy of religious feelings. Enkindle in your heart the flame of devotion, and the fire of charity. Be interested in what you deliver; for unless you are, all attempts at pathos will be mere affectation, and will chill the soul, and benum its affections. Never make a show of more sensibility, than you actually possess; for if at any time, from bodily indisposition, or that icy state of mind to which the most fervent men are occasionally subject, your own heart is cold, swelling words and boisterous

emphasis will not warm the hearts of your hearers. I know that you disapprove, and I do not recommend to you, the use of theatrical gestures; for I believe with you, that tricks of action are not necessary to enforce the truths of the gospel. I do not ask you to thunder, like a heathen orator; to bellow, like the leader of a political faction; to rant, like a preacher of enthusiasm: for your aim should be, not to excite, but to restrain, the passions of your auditors; not to fill their breasts with frenzy and fanaticism, but with meekness and moderation. Let your eloquence, like the religion, which it is intended to infuse, be gentle: let it not rush like a torrent, but flow like a clear and majestick river.

You will acknowledge the propriety of these directions, if you consider what ought to be the principal subjects of your preaching. They are the duties of piety and virtue. These duties are so plain and evident, that a simplicity of style and manner, and a softness of speech, will most readily convey them to the bosoms of christians. I exhort you to dwell frequently on these topicks: bring them again and again before your hearers, under every possible form and variety, that you may excite their attention, and touch their hearts.

But whenever you preach, remember that you are a christian minister; and that it is your business, not merely to inculcate a system of morality, but that morality which is taught in the gospel. Enforce every duty on christian principles; and deduce your precepts from the sacred scriptures. Preach Christ, and his religion, and not the doctrines and commandments of men. The virtues, which you enjoin, establish upon the authority of God. This will lead you to discourse on his nature and perfections; subjects, which will furnish you with many arguments for the practice of holiness. Whenever you speak to the people, consider yourself in the presence of that adorable Being, whose attributes are both sublime and lovely, and who is the fear, the hope, the joy of the universe. This contemplation will give elevation to your sentiments, and dignity to your language.

Let the life and character of the great head of the church also frequently constitute the subjects of your preaching. Let him be the model which you hold up, whenever you describe the perfect man: propose his example for the emulation and encouragement of the believer. In the church, which you have now entered, particular days are appointed, to

commemorate the remarkable circumstances of our Saviour's mediation ; especially his birth, death, and resurrection. On these occasions, you will have an opportunity of calling the attention of your hearers to the sublime virtues of the Redeemer, and of describing him as the object of the love and veneration of the christian. But on all other occasions, it will not be easy for you to deliver a sermon, without reference to the authority and example of Christ ; for you cannot name a duty, which he has not both commanded and practised.

As preaching ought in general to be practical, I would counsel you to study the constitution of the human mind ; that you may be able to describe the nature and properties of actions, and to point out the salutary fruits of virtue, and the deplorable effects of sin. Never spare vice ; but boldly rebuke it, under whatever form it may appear. Whilst you console the good man, alarm the conscience of the impious. Show, that without holiness no man can ever see the Lord ; but that God will retaliate on the heads of the wicked the evil deeds which they commit.

But though preaching ought generally to be practical ; yet you should not forget that in religion,

there are doctrines as well as duties. To the former you ought sometimes to turn your attention. Explain what is obscure; and exhibit the doctrines of the gospel in such a rational view, as that they shall approve themselves to the common sense of your hearers. As men, however, vary in their ideas of doctrines, in treating them, you must of necessity differ from the opinions of many christians: which will render this part of your office in some measure unpleasant; in particular when you are obliged to oppose established errours, which appear to you to corrupt the purity of divine revelation. This opposition, as an honest man, you ought to make, and will make; but at the same time avoid, as much as is possible, the thorny paths of controversy. "The dispute about religion and the practice of it seldom go together;" but the usual effect of polemical divinity, and of polemical preaching, is to embitter the temper and harden the heart.

II. But however solid, eloquent, and instructive your preaching may be, its effect will not be great, unless you add the force of a good example. It is absolutely necessary, my brother, that you should be a man of piety and virtue. Be honest;

of consequence, a sincere believer of the religion, which you profess. Be circumspect in your behaviour, pure in your conversation, temperate, humble, disinterested, and charitable. In the discharge of your ministry, in particular, be an example to the flock. Do your own duty faithfully ; and thus encourage the people to discharge with fidelity the several obligations, which lie upon them. Be the son, the brother, the father of your parishioners. They deserve, and will warmly return, your love. Rejoice with them, when they rejoice ; and weep with them, when they weep. Visit the sick ; comfort and relieve the poor ; dispel the doubts of the penitent ; and pour the light of the gospel into the darkened mind.

Though your profession exempts you from many temptations ; yet there are some, to which it is peculiarly exposed. Know your danger, and carefully guard your heart. The vices and follies, to which clergymen are most prone, are indolence, vanity, haughtiness, the love of popularity, and the love of dominion, envy, flattery of the rich and great, dishonest compliances with the prejudices of men, and a bitter and uncharitable zeal. It will demand the most heroick exertions, and the most ardent

prayers, to keep yourself entirely free from the contagion of these sins. But if you fill your heart with devotion and love; if you resolve to live, not for yourself, but for the good of others, and for the glory of God, you will succeed in the laborious attempt.

It is happy for you, that you are not only to be connected with an affectionate church, but that you are to dwell in a town, where the habits of so many are virtuous; where there is so little superstition and fanaticism, and so much of the spirit of benevolence and genuine christianity; where the people are universally attached to their pastors; and where the several clergymen, though they have adopted dissimilar creeds, live together like a family of brothers. In particular, the young ministers, with whom you will have the longest intercourse, are not only adorned with brilliant talents, but are blessed with candid hearts. I advise you to cultivate their friendship. Conversation with them will be the source of mutual improvement. Their learning, taste, and eloquence will excite your emulation; and as I am persuaded that both you and they have honourable minds, you will never be jealous of each other's success. From the combined efforts of you

and them, I expect to see "the new era of preaching," which has already commenced, become still more splendid; an era, in which the ministers of this town will rival the solidity of the English, and the elegance of the French, divines.

Whilst you run with them a generous career, remember that your country and posterity, as well as this religious society, have demands on your talents. Whatever time therefore you can spare from the duties of your office, devote to those literary pursuits, to which your taste inclines you, and in which you can render yourself the most useful. As the country is still too young, to give much encouragement to men of letters, the publick must be indebted to the spontaneous and unrewarded exertions of the learned professions for improvements in the arts and sciences. You will not be a worse preacher, because you understand something beside divinity; for "there is a connexion between all the branches of human knowledge;" and he, who is skilled in many, will most perfectly comprehend the art, to which he is in particular devoted.

Not only endeavour to acquire a respectable literary character, but be mindful also, that you are the citizen of an extensive republick; and that next

to the interests of religion, the interests of your country ought to be dear to your heart. I here claim for you a right, which you possess in common with others, the right of giving your vote at elections, and your opinion on publick measures. Under such a government as ours, the judgment of the wise is always of use; and an enlightened clergyman, if he is moderate and candid, will possess his proper share of influence. With patriotick boldness, therefore, employ your hand, your tongue, and, if needed, your pen, in favour of good men and upright measures; but never so far forget the sanctity of your vocation, as to make the pulpit the scene of party-politicks.

In prescribing to you so many duties and exertions, I leave you no leisure for sloth, dissipation, and luxury; no leisure for unprofitable visits, for ungodly mirth and foolish jesting. No, my brother, every moment of your time must be filled up with some useful pursuit. Whilst you breathe, you must think, and speak, and work; but life is short, and there will be rest enough in the grave.

You are still young; but death will soon overtake you. This solemn truth furnishes you with a strong motive to diligence. The world abounds

with comforts, and even pleasures : it is a world, every part of which displays the goodness of God. But the present scene is not permanent : all its joys are passing rapidly away ; and you look for something more substantial. A recent affliction has convinced you of the vanity of the world. The loss of an amiable parent has inflicted a wound, which still bleeds. In concluding my address to you, what can I do better, than to exhort you to imitate his pious and holy life? Let the image of his fidelity, his sincerity, his candour, his ardent love of truth, his kindness, his disinterestedness, and the many other virtues, which adorned his character as a man, and as a minister of the gospel, be ever present in your mind ; and continue through life to be a son, who shall do honour to the memory of so excellent a father.

ADDRESS TO THE CHURCH.

My beloved brethren, I congratulate you on the auspicious transactions of this day. Of the minister, whom you have now introduced into office, you know my opinion; you know how highly I approve his settlement among you: this is not the time, nor the place, to praise him. The duty, which you owe him, I pointed out in the morning; and if I had not, you perfectly understand it. The kindness and generosity, with which you have always treated me, are sure pledges to him of your attention and friendship. During the period of twenty years, no cause of disquiet has arisen; no circumstance has taken place, to interrupt the harmony, which was so happily begun. With such an affectionate people, my brother has reason to hope that his life will be happy. And you, my friends, on your part, have cause for pleasing expectations. The youth and health of your new pastor promise you many years of usefulness and love; and long

after I am laid in the grave, the light of his instructions will shed a kindly influence on your children. Receive him therefore with respect and affection: and let the spirit of mutual condescension still continue to adorn your society. Endeavour to serve and please each other; live in peace; and may the God of love and peace be with you.

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